

The following are my comments on 04-233:

I own and operate Radio Station KPIN in Pinedale, Wyoming. The 2000 census for Pinedale shows approximately 1400 people in this community, and indeed, KPIN is a small-town radio station... the only local radio station in the county.

It is only because of the relaxed rules on unattended operation that Pinedale even has a radio station. In small communities, it is extremely difficult to operate a local radio station without financial loss, and the only reason that KPIN has been on the air during the past ten years is because my wife, Karen, and myself do most of the work ourselves.

We are very much in touch with our community. I serve on the Sheriff's emergency task force, and we are always ready to serve our community in times of emergencies. Although the station normally operates unattended at night and on weekends, during the past year, we have had two emergencies where we operated the radio station live throughout the entire emergency. One was a grass and sagebrush fire, enhanced by strong winds, which was headed directly towards Pinedale. We broadcast live reports from fire and law enforcement officials, and assisted in the evacuation of homes just north of Pinedale. The other recent emergency was an extended power outage in the depth of winter, with pipes (and people!) starting to freeze in their homes. KPIN assisted in announcing locations for people in sub-zero homes to go to. Many citizens of the Pinedale area use woodburning stoves, so it was a matter of finding out who would take in guests, and announcing this on the radio... while at the same time broadcasting updates from the power company. During both emergencies, several members of the general public stopped by the studio to assist us in our efforts.

Without KPIN radio, our community would have had a difficult time coping with both of these emergencies.

That fact that the station is not staffed at night is not a problem. The local sheriff has my cell phone number, and also the phone numbers of family members and backup volunteers. On those rare instances when I leave town for the weekend, I put someone in charge for emergencies, and let the sheriff's dispatcher know who this person is and how to contact this person.

If KPIN were required to staff the radio station at night and on weekends, KPIN could no longer exist. As-is, we are "just barely making it", and with the added expense of night and weekend staffing, we simply would have to shut down the radio station.

Shutting down the radio station would cause one additional area of harm: My retirement "fund" is the radio station. The effect on myself and my family would be the same as if I had kept my retirement money in gold coins, and someone

came into my home and stole all my gold. Requiring small market radio stations to be staffed at all times they are on the air would rob station owners of their investment and retirement in small markets all over America. With this requirement, the market value of a small town radio station would plunge to zero.

There is also another serious problem that small market (and big market, too) radio stations would face: the proposed committee of locals meeting to advise the radio station. Any time such a committee is formed, the committee is never made up of ordinary, average, hard-working, family members. These folks are too busy earning a living and working with their families to seek out and serve on a committee like this. What would happen is the committee would fill up with fringe-type political activists, all with an agenda that they want pushed. If the radio station was not in harmony with their fringe agenda, these committee members would create one royal headache for the radio station to have to deal with. The committee would not be advising the radio station on the needs of the community... we ascertain community needs on our own already... but it would be an effort to coerce the radio station to promote the agenda of a very small minority of the population being served... most likely an agenda not shared by the majority in the community.

These changes will literally bring about the death of small market broadcasting.

If anything, the FCC should work on making changes to lighten the load of small market broadcasters, by removing many of the regulations already imposed upon them.

Respectfully submitted,

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